/39 cont./

755 Therefore, the Indians, scorning natural observation, go with blind faith to their piaches or enchanters, who are con-
000 sidered doctors or curers and never as priests. Pliny the Elder has already made note of and written: "No one doubts that magic was born from medicine. In primitive societies the magician was, above all, a physician." Very correctly did Proodt also write that "as primitive men attribute sickness to the action of a spirit, they are not content with the simple administration of infusions or powders."

757 The use of a few tisanes, purgatives, and emollients, of
177 a few shell poultices with more or less tannic acid (and as a result disinfectant), and the application of formic acid directly by means of the bite of ants or wasps, all of these almost certainly were learned from the Creoles. In any case this constitutes an exception in their medicinal regimen and in their mentality or means of conceiving of diseases and their remedies.

755 88. The typical way in which the Indians cure themselves is by means of the tarénmurú (charms or magic prayers) and the practices of the piaches, which are of the same sort. We might, perhaps, have a chance to return to the subject of these charms; for the time being let it suffice to say that they are "a short prayer addressed to a piá or pachí (trunk or head) of a certain animal, plant, or legendary being, possessor of qualities or power against the evil which it is desired to dispel, or with the ability to produce some good which is desired, or the vehicle of some disease which it is desired might enter into another." These words are pronounced over some receiving-transmitting object and in addition it is blown upon, not with the mouth but with the nose; this also gives rise to the name of blowing (tarén), which is given to the charms. These, as has been seen, can either be beneficial, tarem-bá, or maleficent, mui-má. /40/

000 89. For the greater clarity of what is herein said, I shall copy a Pemón charm and shall transcribe another Egyptian one,

756 unknown to any of my informants and the piaches themselves are quite unapproachable on the subject.[173]

756 776 [787] Piaimá, a supernatural being or spirit, is said to have initiated the first piaches into their mysteries by exactly the same procedure that I have described for the earthly piache's initiation of an apprentice. He is also said now to be corporeally visible to a piache (but to no one else) and to converse with and advise the piaches. Although I lack specific information on the point, it therefore seems highly probable that the initiation involves the invocation of Piaimá and that some, at least, of the various curative procedures also involve his presence and co-operation. However this may be, it is definite that the piaches are in rapport with Piaimá and that he is for them co-operative in some degree but that for other Indians and without the intervention of a piache he is exceedingly dangerous and may appear in the guise of a savage killer. He is thus essentially evil, a devil in fact, and the piaches derive much of their power through personal acquaintance with this devil and through their ability to temper his wrath or to direct his activities into desirable channels.

The Theory of Disease.

753 Although I shall not go into detail on this subject, the Kamarakoto theory of disease is so inextricably linked with magic and religion that it must be briefly summarized. It is not now true of the Kamarakotos, as has been stated for various Indian tribes, and probably was never true that they considered quite all ailments to be supernatural in origin. The manifest relationship between insect and snake bites and their immediate effects (but of course excluding malaria and other secondary effects) is naturally recognized. All swellings and ulcers are ascribed to such causes, even when this is not correct. It is not clear to me whether an ulcer, for instance, is supposed to be due to an actual bite, unnoticed at the time, or to the bite of a supernatural insect or snake. Although there is no clear recognition of their cause, colds, constipation, indigestion, and the like (but not the fever that may arise from these) are also now considered usually to have natural causes, although in this case one cannot be [755] sure that such an opinion is not relatively recent. For these ailments believed to be natural in origin spiritual remedies may nevertheless be applied, such as [757] remedial dancing for ulcers. Physical remedies, including various herbs and infusions, are, however, in common use for them and this purely medical subject is outside the scope of my report.

Diseases for which there is no obvious physical cause, particularly fevers [754] of any sort, are considered to be wholly supernatural in origin. These are usually caused by kanaimaton (plural; singular — kanaima).

173 [see footnote on p. 328, category 116 — Analyst]